THE PASSING AWAY OF A FAMOUS OLD CITY GARDEN

Beautiful Bower of the Corcorans Being Razed to Make Way for the March of Progress---A Spot Filled With Romantic and Historic Interest. The Lament of the Ancient Gardener, James O'Day.

James O'Day, Veteran Caretaker of the Corcoran Gardens.

MANY people in Washington, particularly the old residents, view with regret the destruction of the Corcoran garden on the corner of Connecticut Avenue and H Street, even though a fine new apartment house is to take its place. Yet no one is more grieved at the sacrificing of this beautiful and historic spot to the building interests than James O'Day, the old gardener who has cared for the place for the last forty years. He is full of reminiscences of the events which have occurred there and the families he has served. He knows that before his time, long ago in the early 40's, Daniel Webster, when Secretary of State, occupied Corcoran house and spent many a quiet, restful hour in the old garden. The faithful gardener can point out each spot in the grounds that has remained unaltered since the time of Webster and show the interested visitor where the famous statesman used to search for the first spring blossoms, with which he took great pride in adorning his breakfast table.

How often a thoughtful man like Webster would seek the seclusion of the garden for rest and recreation one can well imagine. The family were in the habit of sitting in the summer house, and sometimes a niece who spent much time at the house on "President's Square," as it was then called, would read aloud, Charles Sprague's poems being particularly enjoyed by Mr. Webster.

An old garden in the heart of a city is always an object of romantic interest. Over the high walls at this season the passer-by gets tempting glimpses of a wealth of flowering trees, magnolias, and other blossoms, that give touches of exquisite coloring against the background of fresh green. It is a spot of beauty and a delight to those who live near it. Within, it is a place to dream of days long past. More stories are current of this old garden than perhaps of any other in the land except that of Mount Vernon.

Retreat of Famous Men.

During the Webster period the old place was frequently the scene of brilliant entertainments, and such men as Edward Everett, Rufus Choate, William Wirt, and John Marshall were in the habit of congregating there.

Before and during the Mexican war it was occupied by the British minister, Mr. Pakenham. Here he kept open house, and such festivities were indulged in as will admit of no rivals even in this day of lavish expenditures. James O'Day, however, does not think it possible that any more notable or elegant gatherings could ever have assembled in the house and garden than those which he himself has witnessed.

When he was first appointed to the position of gardener, which he has so proudly held for so many years, M. de Montholon, the then French minister, was in possession of the premises. "And many a time," says the aged gardener, "I have brought comfortable chairs out onto the grass and placed them in sandy places for the Marquise de Montholon and the fine ladies who came to see her. The ministers from other countries most all lived near here, and their wives, and their daughters, too, used to like to come and sit in our garden and get flowers to take home with them."

A Famous Trysting Place.

In those days when the famous old garden was a favorite trysting place for the ladies of the Diplomatic Corps, James, working quietly among his plants, heard many a choice bit of gossip, but like the trees, the flowers, and the high brick wall surrounding the grounds, he told no tales. He remembers the wonderful ball which was given by the order of Louis Napoleon, when the Marquise de Montholon wore a magnificent Paris gown, covered with jeweled fleur-de-lis and across her breast the coat of arms of Napoleon and that of the house of de Montholon. Sir Frederick Bruce, minister from the Court of St. James, led the cotillon, which, on account of the large crowd, was not commenced till 5 o'clock in the morning. General Grant was there and danced with Miss Harris, who was in the box at the theater with President Lincoln the night of his assassination. The dancing lasted till broad daylight, when a royal breakfast was served to the guests.

In speaking of the late W. W. Corcoran, who purchased the place from Daniel Webster, James O'Day said: "He was a fine man, a fine gentleman. And don't I know? Didn't I work for him for twenty-five years after he got back from Europe?"

And surely nobody should be better qualified to pass upon a "fine gentleman" than the man who worked for him for a quarter of a century.

Was "A Smart One, Too."

"He was a smart one, too," continued the old gardener, with a smile of approval lighting up his wrinkled face. "He got out of here just in time. The next day they was a-going to arrest him because he sympathized with the South, and if he had once got locked up his money would not have done him much good. But he was too quick for 'em. He got the place rented to the French government, too, else it would have been all confiscated, but with the French minister here they did not dare to touch a thing."

It is evident to see that the gardener, as well as the master, also sympathized with the South. "But," said the old man, "I see now it was better for the Union to win, but those Southern soldiers were as fine gentlemen as I would ever wish to see."

James O'Day came to Washington from Ireland just fifty years ago. He has seen the city grow up as it were, and has particularly vivid memories of the dreadful war days when the Capital of the Nation was white with tents and full of soldiers. He took out his naturalization papers as soon as possible after arriving, but has made several visits to his home country. On one return trip he brought a bonny Irish girl back with him as his wife, and they were very happy in the land of their adoption. Since her death, eleven years ago, the old man has become more and more attached to the garden where the best part of his life has been spent. Three of their children have also died. There is one still living, a daughter, Annie O'Day, who resides in Baltimore, and with whom her father frequently goes over to spend Sunday.

Love's Labor Lost.

The old man now has a room in the main house from the window of which he can look out upon the garden, where for forty years he has pruned the trees, weeded the lawns, cared for the ivy which grow luxuriantly over the picturesque old brick wall, and superintended many changes in the grounds during his term of service. He planted many of the thrifty shrubs that are now being ruthlessly torn up, and watched them grow from year to year with proud interest. It is indeed a scene of destruction that meets the eye of faithful James O'Day as he sits at his chamber window and gazes across the once beautiful landscape where his lifework was represented. A crew of laborers are at work with pick and shovel raising sad havoc among his rearly loved plants and flowers. Even fine old shade trees are being mercilessly torn from the ground and the high brick wall is now but a mass of unsightly debris.

The company which last month bought the property from Mr. Eustis, one of the Corcoran heirs, are losing no time in turning their money-making scheme into a reality. When Senator and Mrs. Depew, who make Corcoran house their Washington home, return from their European travels in the fall, they will find a gigantic apartment house where they left an ideal garden spot.

Of late years the residents of the Capital associate the place with beautiful lawn fetes, when on the well-kept sward distinguished personages, both diplomatic and official, have gathered under the stately shade trees, and the music of the Marine Band has floated out on the balmy air of May and June, suggesting to the inhabitants of the work-a-day world without some of the charm of the scene within.

Senator Depew's Liberality.

Senator Depew has always been most liberal in lending the garden to the various charitable organizations for their afternoon lawn fetes, and the pictures on these festive occasions of the elegantly dressed women and distinguished statesmen who thronged the grounds are still fresh in the mind of social Washington.

The late Senator Brice and his family occupied the house and grounds before Senator Depew's time, and gave some notable entertainments in the garden, particularly brilliant among which was one in honor of Princess Eulalia of Spain.

It is said the son of Lord Lytton, Robert Bulwer Lytton (Owen Meredith), wrote "Lucille" in this garden, while here as secretary of the British legation, with his uncle, Sir Henry Lytton, who was minister.

SMUGGLING BY NAVY OFFICERS

NAVY officers in Washington are much interested in the indictment of some of their brothers of the service in Porto Rico on charges of smuggling dutiable goods into the island. They are in doubt as to the outcome of the prosecutions, and until the cases of the accused have been settled some of the oldest practices in the navy are likely to be discontinued. The officers are sensitive to the general belief that they have special privileges and certain opportunities to smuggle which are denied to the average nephew or niece of Uncle Sam. Consequently it is said that the practice of buying cigars when cruising in the West Indies, wines abroad, and other things which go to make the happiness of the wardroom complete, have ceased temporarily.

It is true that the sailor is like other people. He is human, and he likes, when on duty in foreign countries, to buy many articles of value to be brought home for himself or his friends.

On most such articles navy officers pay duty, but as they are able to buy cheaply they do not pay as much in duty as the ordinary citizen who imports articles. Doubtless naval officers do sometimes bring in dutiable goods on which they pay no duty. They usually buy citizens' clothing when abroad, and they are disposed, like the rest of mankind, to give themselves the benefit of every doubt in construing their privileges under the law. Every naval officer who smokes buys a good supply of tobacco when cruising in the West Indies. He has a right to buy as much as he will for his own use aboard ship, and to use it on the voyage, and when he reaches home so long as he is still attached to the ship.

Of course, if the letter of the law is observed the officer, perhaps, has no right to smoke this tobacco ashore. But, when the officer lights his cigar just before leaving the Washington navy yard to pay his visits uptown, he very naturally does not search the river front for a revenue officer to pay him the duty on this individual cigar. And then if he be much of a smoker, it is more than probable that he has a few of these cigars in his upper vest pocket, and he is likely to give one or two to his friends. Then, too, cases are known where he has yielded to temptation and has taken a box of his cigars ashore.

It is well known that the wardroom of an American man-of-war cruising in European waters is usually stocked with wines that never pay duty to the United States Government.

Such wines are consumed in the course of the voyage, and may also be consumed as the ship lies in port on this side of the water.

They are not, however, smuggled ashore, and if the ship suddenly goes out of commission while there is yet a considerable stock of wines aboard, the wines are likely to be sold to the wardroom mess of some outgoing ship of the navy.

While the naval officer is expected to know something about the tariff, he is not required to be an expert. When officers come from abroad on regular commercial ships, as they frequently do, they act exactly as the other travelers act, and pay duty as they do.

Sometimes they have to pay heavy duties on articles which they hoped to bring in free. It often happens that a homecoming officer fetches along with him articles intrusted to him by some brother officer still abroad.

A few years ago an officer returning from the Asiatic station with articles of a brother officer had to pay at San Francisco a round sum in duties on the goods of his friend.

Such cases are rare, however, and officers are not often caught in an unmistakable attempt to defraud the Government of duties.

POOR OLD WORLD.

The world's a weary, dreary place
  Where only poor men dwell;
There's not a man who has the face
  To say he's doing well.
There's Brown, alas! The poor church mouse
  Was not as poor as he;
There's nothing in his splendid house
  Worth turning round to see;
His grand piano, pictures, rugs,
  His books and silver, too,
Are but the merest flimsy trash—
  The Tax Assessor's due.

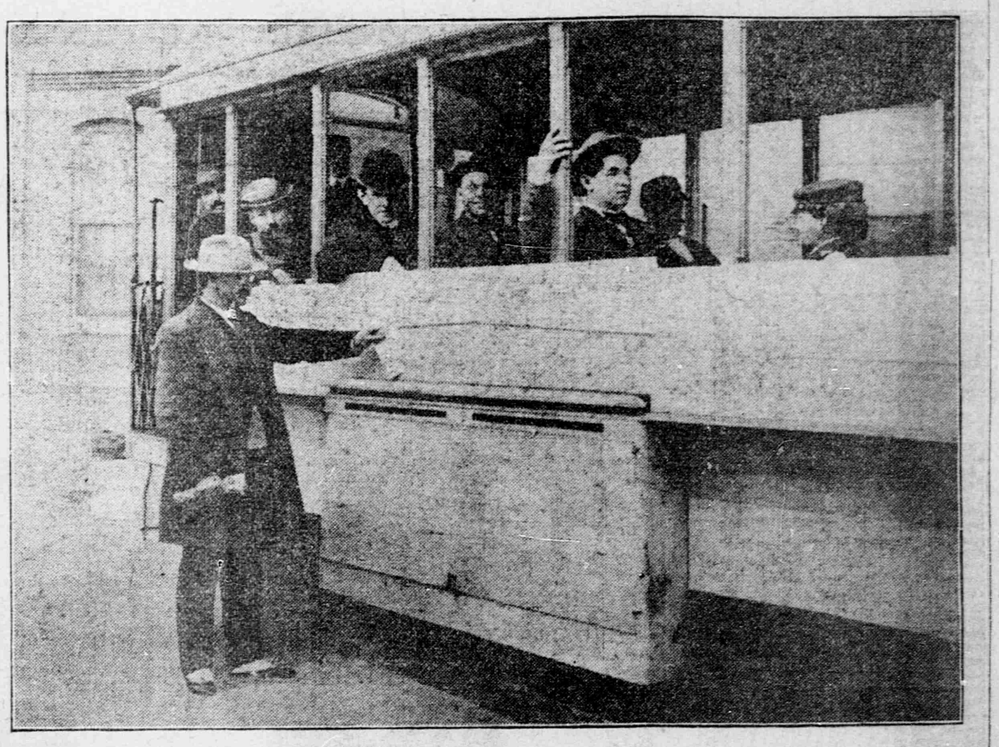
Poor Jones, who lives up yonder, where
  His palace walls loom high,
Has nothing that is precious there;
  He looks with many a sigh
Upon the cheap and worthless things
  That fill the place; he sees
His poor wife's hands ablaze with rings
  Not worth their weight in cheese!
His horses and his carriages
  Are hardly worth a whoop—
That is to say, just now—the Tax
  Assessor's on the snoop.

But yesterday, perhaps, you passed,
  Yon stately pile of stone,
And longing, envious glances cast,
  And wished 'twere all your own.
Ah, put such idle thoughts aside
  And go your happy way,
For want and poverty abide
  Behind that granite gray.
The grandeur that you view is all
  But worthless counterfeit,
Or will be till the tax man comes
  To ask concerning it.

Full many a gem of purest ray
  The ocean caverns bear,
But it would not be thus, if they
  Had tax assessors there.
In heaven men have treasures, too;
  Therefore it must be hard
For tax assessors to get through
  Where Peter stands on guard.
Down here upon this dismal earth
  There's little men possess
That's worth a look from those who come
  To snoop and to assess.

—S. E. Kiser in Chicago Record-Herald.

DEVICE FOR MAILING LETTERS ON A MOVING STREET CAR



Inventor McAllister Looking Out of Third Window From Left.

NO longer will the letter you wanted rushed off to your family, your sweetheart, or your wife be forced to lie uncollected and needlessly delayed in the mailbox on the street corner while precious hours drag by and mail train after mail train starts away from Washington without the missive. No longer will you need to fret over wasted time and gnaw your nails in impatience while you wait for the gray-clad form of the mail carrier to come slowly up the street, as fast as a man on foot can go, it is true, but still seeming so slow to you as you wait and watch his snail's pace. For now a contrivance has been devised by a Washington man by which your letter can be delivered at the city postoffice building in time for the first possible train, in less than half an hour, even if you were as far away as Georgetown when you sealed the envelope. The device is nothing more or less than a letterbox attached to the side of a street car, into which you drop your letter with perfect safety while the car is moving as fast as permitted within the city limits. The inventor of the attachment for street car collections is George B. McAllister, of this city, and the device has been actually tested during the last two weeks on a car belonging to a local line.

The contrivance is a wide, shallow mail-box fastened vertically to the side of the car. Its top, placed at a convenient height from the ground, is pierced by two long slots about two inches wide and four feet long. Although these slots are of necessity left entirely open, no rain, snow, or wind entering through them can injure the letters which have been dropped through them, for the missives slip down to the bottom of the box on narrow steel strips liks the runners of an overturned sled, set close together, and between which the rain is led off as though by miniature gutters, without touching the mail. A screen prevents the letters being blown out by the wind.

Persons who wish to mail a letter will go to the "far" side of the street, not the side where the car makes its regular stop for passengers, and wait for the car to come along, which in this city occurs every three minutes or less during the day. The motorman will accordingly slow down, though this is not really necessary, without entirely stopping, and the letter can be readily deposited in the slots.

The committee of postoffice officials which witnessed a test of the device some days ago has reported it as operating with perfect success to the Assistant Secretary of the department. It cannot as yet be stated whether funds for its general installation will be procurable or not, and the probabilities are that the matter will be left to the street car lines to adopt if it is thought profitable by them to make such collections under governmental contract. No large pieces of mail matter can be inserted in the opening, and for such the present corner boxes must always be retained.

The main use of the attachment will be to get important letters to the central postoffice in a hurry.

WILLOW FURNITURE POPULAR FOR SUMMER

THERE is very little in the way of summer furniture that is not made in the hand-wrought willow nowadays.

Willow is much more durable than reed or rattan. It is tough and firm, and by proper treatment beatiful color tones can be obtained. Greens and reds, browns and yellows are the colors most used, and exquisite shades are obtained in smooth, soft finish, almost giving the impression that the willow has grown in the colors in which the finished furniture appears. Foreign workmen as a rule do most of the willow work in this country. It must be made in a damp place, and it requires an artist in designing to furnish the shapes of the different pieces and the color schemes.

Green the Leading Color.

Green, always good for summer, is a good color in decorations for the house at any time, and it is in special favor this year. The green in which the willow appears is of a soft grayish shade, which is particularly charming and blends with whatever colors are used with it. The red is a deep rich shade, called a sealing wax red, and is approaching almost to a Harvard crimson. The brown is soft and light, and the yellow is beautiful, a bright light shade, like a ray of sunlight. But yellow requires careful handling, and if not properly combined with other colors it may become a decorative tragedy. Entire suites of furniture are made in this yellow willow, upholstered with some pretty cool material in contrasting colors, and where here and there a chair is to be found upholstered in yellow to match the willow it is delightful.

Used in Heavy Furniture.

Even the largest and heaviest pieces of furniture are made in the willow, and a double bed made of it is strong and durable, and has, what is equally to the point, an appearance of stability. Iron pieces are set into each corner of the bedstead to support the mattress; there are good-sized posts with big ball ends at the four corners of the bedstead supporting the head and foot boards, and these, of solid willow work, have strong round top pieces joining the posts. There is an effective cross design in the willow work at the head and foot, a design which is repeated with good effect in many other pieces of the willow furniture.

Green is the color usually to be found in bedrooms furnished in willow. There will be in addition to the bedstead a pretty desk, and there are many designs from which to choose, some with shelves for books and small drawers at the back, and others with a plain desk top and drawers beneath. There are dressing tables with strong willow-covered posts supporting the mirrors and with several drawers beneath the table; there are also couches in several designs and easy chairs, simple desk and dressing table chairs, and one or more small stands or tables.

Glazed English Chintzes make one of the prettiest coverings for the furniture. They come in brilliant colors, and frequently in large and closely set designs. Englishwomen delight in these chintzes, and decorate entire rooms with them. They are said to have the advantage of being washable in the sense that if a little soiled the glazed surface can be wiped off with a damp cloth, but, as a matter of fact, the glaze comes off with the soil, and there is a dull spot in the bright surface. However, being highly glazed, they do not collect dust and dirt as rougher materials do. Self-toned cotton jutes are simple and inexpensive materials which make excellent coverings for willow furniture, and one delightful parlor or drawing room suite of furniture in white enameled willow is covered with a printed linen, which, if it would not be called as pretty as the gayer chintzes, has a certain style that is excellent, and color tones which are a delight. Blue and green are the particular color tones in this set; these upon a white background, a conventional design in squares like small tiles. A style of furniture which may be mentioned here, and which can be used with good effect to furnish entire rooms in houses where the willow furniture has been adopted, is called cottage furniture, and is made with no frame showing, the pieces covered entirely with upholstery.

Variation in Shading.

One set of cottage furniture is covered with printed linen in the same design as the blue and green on the white willow, but this in green and pink, a delicate shade of the pink and a soft color green. The furniture is short-backed and has short plaitings around the lower edges. A piece or two combined with the willow furniture is pretty.

Even the dining room comes into the scheme of furnishing in willow, and delightful sideboards are made of this material. They are after the style of the Hepplewhite or Sheraton sideboard, very long, standing upon four high legs. There is a straight, smooth top with a back several inches in height, a long center drawer beneath, with two smaller drawers at the ends; beneath the last two closed cupboards, and under the middle drawer an open one. It makes a pretty piece of furniture.

Sofas and Settles in Willow.

There is almost more variety to be found in the willow furniture than that made in the different woods. Sofas and settes are among the prettiest pieces, and they vary indefinitely. A Washington Irving settle has a high, straight back and high sides, and a Grantham settle is shorter and has the high back, but low arms at the ends. A Langham settle is more on the order of a couch, and has a low straight back which turns and crosses one end, the other, which is rounded, being open. A trianon settle is of French design. A Lenox seat is on the order of a settle, but has two ends and no back. Couches are raised in a slant at one end, and may or may not have a back. Pretty flowered striped materials are sometimes used to upholster these couches in place of the chintz, and green jute on green willow is cool and refreshing, and there are varieties of other inexpensive cottons.

A "Currytuck" Chair.

A low round-backed chair is made especially for a woman's seat, and there are many varieties of large lounging chairs. These have a variety of broad arms and work and paper baskets at the sides. A "Currytuck" chair has an adjustable back and may be made straight or slanting at will. A French lounging chair comes in three pieces. The first and largest is in the form of a big easy chair. Place the second piece across the front of this and there is a half-lounging chair with only the feet hanging; draw up the third piece and the feet are also supported, and there is a reclining chair. A conversation chair is a combination of two chairs and a table, the chairs facing each other with the stand, with a top and under shelf between them.

Tables vary in size from the large round table with the center standard of the willow, which could be used for the dining table of a small family, to the three-shelved muffin stand, which really belongs in a class by itself. There are round tables and square tables, big tables and little ones, plain and with various little shelves. One of the best is a long square-cornered library table, heavily made, having four strong post legs, a spacious top, and a low shelf the same size beneath, with two narrow shelves supported at the two sides and halfway between the top and lower shelf.

An English Dinner Cart.

An English dinner cart on wheels is another piece of furniture which comes in the willow. The wheels are the size of those on an ordinary baby carriage, and the body of the cart has two shelves to hold the various viands and dishes. In this country we call this a tea cart, and use it for transporting the afternoon tea service to the piazza when tea is served in summer.

With the introduction of much decorated walls there is nothing prettier than a French paper that is used with this willow furniture. There is in the first place a dado of a deep, rich green, and above this a landscape paper covering the upper part of the wall. The upper part of the paper is in a light color, the shade of the atmosphere. The whole is a French garden scene, a charming view with many green trees. With the use of this paper and flowered chintzes with the willows in wood tones a whole house is almost transformed into a garden.

THE DIFFERENCE

HE was driving home in his well-appointed brougham, his finely shaped, clean-cut head stiff on his shoulders, and his arms folded close. In years so far gone that they seemed like part of another man's life he had feared to enter upon a public career because of the shadow of that old folly; but even its memory had been dead for a decade. The thought of it had been loathsome to him and he had buried it. How could others remember when he had forgotten?

They had not remembered accurately, but his ears were being tortured by the cries of the newsboys whose wares told the miserable story to the world. It had been telegraphed all over the country, and it might at this critical time change the politics of a State. Still, the story had been taken by the wrong end. He could show that some of it was false, but the bare skeleton left would seriously injure him in the last instance.

And there was Edith! As he thought of her his head drooped; his beautiful, stately wife, who had exchanged her proud old name for his, which he had dragged from obscurity by mere personal force. It was with a grain of comfort that he remembered that all the story had not been published, and he could attack part as false. A loophole remained to him. She might consider him a victim. After all, she was a woman, and women listen to explanations from those they love. He was a victim. Why should his correct middle-age suffer for the folly of a boy? It was horrible injustice.

She sat at home and waited. Her sister, her mother and her dearest friend had come and gone. Her family had wearied her with their indignation and anger. Her friend had been cool, philosophical, as her close friends must be. This one was famous as a woman who despised sentiment. She had advised a calm, chilly, dignified demand for penitence, with a prospect of forgiveness. Incidentally, she mentioned cynically that she herself had tried this very thing with her own erring husband and it had worked magnificently. She advised against divorce. It was vulgar. Besides, one did not want to live eternally alone, and in the long run one man was much like another. He would pay for his folly; he was paying for it now in the publicity. Then the friend lifted her perfumed furs and went away, her carriage making way for the husband's as it drove under the porte cochere.

He opened the door and came in, walking with confidence. She did not move and he stooped as if to kiss her. She rose to her feet, turned from his caress—beautiful, tall and white.

"Henry," she said—and he thought he had never heard her voice so full and rich, the contralto note so thrilling—"there is something I ought to have told you long ago. It was only today that I could. You are a just man, too just I have sometimes thought." The simple words "too just" could not express the pent-up feelings of those years in which she never had seen one deviation from the path of rectitude, in which she had feared to let an impulse show itself to this cold and perfect man.

"Do you think I mean to say one word to add to your worry." Her voice almost broke; and then she went on rapidly: "I am not sorry. I know—nobody can understand so well as I—what temptation may have come to your youth. It—it——" she let her proud head fall. "It also came to mine. I was a child. I loved another before I knew you, and then, when I came to know you, you were so good. It has been a bar between us all these years. Ah!"—she sighed and held out her arms and the tears were on her cheeks and in her voice—"we can say to each other, 'Forgive me, as I forgive you.' We were both children!"

He sprang forward and seized her arms in a vise-like grip.

"Edith!" he screamed, and his voice was full of horror, anger, unbelief. "Are you mad? What are you saying?"

And then, as he realized all of her meaning, he flung her from him as he had flung that degraded sin of his youth and with a curse in his throat turned and left her there.—New York Press.